

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Election tensions build

### Biden on cusp of White House; Trump sows doubt in process

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Democrat Joe Biden was on the cusp of winning the presidency Friday as he opened narrow leads over President Donald Trump in the critical battlegrounds of Georgia and Pennsylvania.

Those put Biden in a stronger position to capture the 270 Electoral College votes needed to take the White House. The winner will lead a country facing a historic set of challenges, including a surging pandemic and deep political polarization.

The focus on Pennsylvania, where Biden led Trump by more than 9,000 votes, and Georgia, where Biden led by more than 1,500, came as Americans entered a third full day after the election without knowing who will lead them for the next four years. The prolonged process added to the anxiety of a nation whose racial and cultural divides were inflamed during the heated campaign.

Biden was at his home in Wilmington, Del., as the vote count continued and aides said he would address the nation in prime time. Trump remained in the White House residence as more results trickled in, expanding Biden's lead in must-win Pennsylvania. In the West Wing, televisions remained tuned to the news amid trappings of normalcy, as reporters lined up for coronavirus tests and outdoor crews worked on the North Lawn on a mild, muggy fall day.

Trump's campaign, meanwhile, was quiet — a dramatic difference from the day before, when it held a morning conference call projecting confidence and held a flurry of hastily ar-

ranged press conferences announcing litigation in key states.

With his pathway to reelection appearing to greatly narrow, Trump was testing how far he could go in using the trappings of presidential power to undermine confidence in the vote.

On Thursday, he advanced unsupported accusations of voter fraud to falsely argue that his rival was trying to seize power in an extraordinary effort by a sitting American president to sow doubt about the democratic process.

"This is a case when they are trying to steal an election, they are trying to rig an election," Trump said from the podium of the White House briefing room.

Biden spent Thursday trying to ease tensions and project a more traditional image of presidential leadership. After participating in a coronavirus briefing, he declared that "each ballot must be counted."

"I ask everyone to stay calm. The process is working," Biden said. "It is the will of the voters. No one, not anyone else who chooses the president of the United States of America."

Trump showed no sign of giving up and was back on Twitter around 2:30 a.m. Friday, insisting the "U.S. Supreme Court should decide!"

Trump's erroneous claims about the integrity of the election challenged Republicans now faced with the choice of whether to break with a president who, though his grip on his office grew tenuous, commanded sky-high approval ratings from rank-and-file members of the GOP. That was especially

true for those who are eyeing presidential runs of their own in 2024.

Maryland GOP Gov. Larry Hogan, a potential presidential hopeful who has often criticized Trump, said unequivocally: "There is no defense for the President's comments tonight undermining our Democratic process. America is counting the votes, and we must respect the results as we always have before."

But others who are rumored to be considering a White House run of their own in four years aligned themselves with the incumbent, including Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., who tweeted support for Trump's claims, writing that "If last 24 hours have made anything clear, it's that we need new election integrity laws NOW."

Trump's campaign engaged in a flurry of legal activity to try to improve the Republican president's chances, saying it would seek a recount in Wisconsin and file lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia.

Judges in Georgia and Michigan quickly dismissed Trump campaign lawsuits there Thursday.

In Pennsylvania, officials were not allowed to process mail-in ballots until Election Day under state law. It's a form of voting that has skewed heavily in Biden's favor after Trump spent months claiming without proof that voting by mail would lead to widespread voter fraud.

Mail ballots from across the state were overwhelmingly breaking in Biden's direction. A final vote total may not be clear for days because the use of mail-in ballots, which

take more time to process, has surged as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trump campaign said it was confident the president would ultimately pull out a victory in Arizona, where votes were also still being counted, including in Maricopa County, the state's most populous area. The AP has declared Biden the winner in Arizona and said Thursday that it was monitoring the vote count as it proceeded.

"The Associated Press continues to watch and analyze vote count results from Arizona as they come in," said Sally Buzbee, AP's executive editor. "We will follow the facts in all cases."

Trump's campaign was lodging legal challenges in several states, though he faced long odds. He would have to win multiple suits in multiple states in order to stop vote counts, since more than one state was undeclared.

Some of the Trump team's lawsuits only demand better access for campaign observers to locations where ballots are being processed and counted. A judge in Georgia dismissed the campaign's suit there less than 12 hours after it was filed. And a Michigan judge dismissed a Trump lawsuit over whether enough GOP challengers had access to handling of absentee ballots.

Biden attorney Bob Bauer said the suits were legally "meritless." Their only purpose, he said "is to create an opportunity for them to message falsely about what's taking place in the electoral process."

# Ga. Senate runoffs may shape presidency

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The outcome in several contested states will determine whether Joe Biden defeats President Donald Trump. If the Democratic challenger wins, the ambitions of a Biden presidency could well come down to Georgia.

Georgia, long a Republican stronghold — but one with rapidly changing demographics — could be the site of two runoffs on Jan. 5 to settle which party would control the Senate.

Should Democrats win them, Biden would be dealing with a majority in the Senate, increasing his chances for passing legislation and securing major appointment confirmations. Otherwise, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, could wield the power to block Biden.

Races in North Carolina and Alaska also hold the potential to reshape the balance of power, but Georgia offers the more likely prospect. Two runoff elections would mean a campaign on an almost nation-

al scale, with tens of millions of dollars spent by both sides.

Biden has been mum on the Senate balance as he awaits the results in his race, but he offered a preview days before Tuesday's election.

"I can't tell you how important it is that we flip the United States Senate. There's no state more consequential than Georgia in that fight," Biden declared at an Atlanta rally on Oct. 27, when he campaigned alongside Democratic Senate hopefuls Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock.

Votes were still being counted to determine whether Ossoff will meet Georgia Sen. David Perdue in a second round. Georgia law requires an outright majority to win a statewide office.

Separately, a Georgia special election to fill the unexpired term of former Sen. Johnny Isakson will require a runoff between Warnock and Sen. Kelly Loeffler, the Republican appointed to the post last year after Isakson retired.

Nationally, the Senate stands

at 48-48. But Republicans lead uncalled races in Alaska and North Carolina. By Thursday, the focus turned to Georgia.

Both sides promised unlimited funds would flow to the campaigns and onto the airwaves, and they predicted an all-star cast of campaigners for a state that in recent weeks drew visits from Biden, Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris and former President Barack Obama.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, a Maryland Democrat who led Senate Democrats' campaign efforts in the 2018 cycle, warned that McConnell, who has gleefully dubbed himself the "grim reaper" of the Democratic agenda, would threaten a Biden presidency if he returns as majority leader.

"His DNA has been all about obstruction and very little about constructive progress together," Van Hollen said.

McConnell almost certainly wouldn't grant a floor vote to Biden's proposal for a public option expansion of the 2010

Affordable Care Act or the Democrat's proposed repeal of some of Trump's top-end tax cuts. McConnell refused to grant Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, hearings or a vote.

Progressives, meanwhile, lament losses in Senate races that could have given Democrats a majority with a cushion. Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, tried Thursday to downplay the pitfalls of GOP control, arguing that "bold executive branch actions that impact people's lives" still could "define Biden's legacy."

Republicans countered with warnings of an "extremist" government if Democrats, who appear positioned to keep the House majority despite losing seats, control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

"David Perdue won this race in regular time and will do the same in overtime," said Kevin McLaughlin, executive director of the Senate Republicans' campaign arm.

## Counties hard-hit by coronavirus vote for Trump

Associated Press

U.S. voters went to the polls starkly divided on how they see President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic. But in places where the virus is most rampant now, Trump enjoyed enormous support.

An Associated Press analysis reveals that in 376 counties with the highest number of new cases per capita, the overwhelming majority — 93% of those counties — went for Trump, a rate above other less severely hit areas.

Most were rural counties in Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin — the kinds of areas that often have lower rates of adherence to social distancing, mask-wearing and other public health measures, and have been a focal point for much of the latest surge in cases.

Taking note of the contrast, state health officials are pausing for a moment of introspection. Even as they worry about rising

numbers of hospitalizations and deaths, they hope to reframe their messages and aim for a reset on public sentiment now that the election is over.

"Public health officials need to step back, listen to and understand the people who aren't taking the same stance" on mask-wearing and other control measures, said Dr. Marcus Plescia of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

"I think there's the potential for things to get less charged and divisive," he said, adding that there's a chance a retooled public health message might unify Americans around lowering case counts so hospitals won't get swamped during the winter months.

The electoral divide comes amid an explosion in cases and hospitalizations in the U.S. and globally.

The U.S. broke another record in the 7-day rolling average for daily new cases, hitting nearly 90,000. The tally for new cases Thursday was on track for another

day above 100,000, with massive numbers reported all around the country, including a combined nearly 25,000 in Texas, Illinois and Florida. Iowa and Indiana each reported more than 4,000 cases as well.

The AP's analysis was limited to counties in which at least 95% of precincts had reported results, and grouped counties into six categories based on the rates of COVID-19 cases they'd experienced per 100,000 residents.

Polling, too, shows voters who split on Republican Trump vs. Democrat Joe Biden differed on whether the pandemic is under control.

Thirty-six percent of Trump voters described the pandemic as completely or mostly under control, and another 47% said it was somewhat under control, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of more than 110,000 voters conducted for the AP by NORC at the University of Chicago. Meanwhile, 82% of Biden voters said the pandemic is not at all under control.

## Oregon man charged with aiding ISIS

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — An Oregon man was indicted Thursday after authorities said he supported Islamic State by distributing articles on how to kill and maim with a knife and encouraging readers to carry out attacks.

Hawazen Sameer Mothafar, 31, appeared in federal court in Portland on charges of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization and providing such support, U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams and FBI Special Agent in Charge Renn Cannon said.

“The threat of ISIS-inspired terrorism remains very real thanks, in part, to an army of online supporters who produce propaganda that aims to incite ‘lone actor’ operators in the U.S. and around the world,” Cannon said.

Mothafar, who has physical disabilities and uses a wheelchair, was released on condition that he limit travel and the use of electronic devices.

The federal public defender appointed to represent him did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment. Mothafar lives in a Portland suburb.

The indictment by a federal grand jury alleges that between February 2015 until the time of his arrest Thursday, Mothafar conspired with ISIS members to provide support, including creating and editing publications and articles.

He also is accused of providing technical support to members of the group overseas on opening social media and email accounts.

In December 2019, according to the indictment, Mothafar attempted to acquire information on the piloting of a drone for Saleck Ould Cheikh Mohamedou, an Islamic extremist who was convicted of attempting to assassinate then-President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania. Mohamedou is currently incarcerated in the African nation.

# Over 5K sailors with critical skills eligible for \$30K bonus

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Some sailors are entitled to a reenlistment bonus of at least \$30,000 after the Navy added more critical skillsets to its eligibility list.

The Navy added 78 more skillsets eligible for the fiscal year 2021 Selective Reenlistment Bonus list allowing about 5,220 additional sailors to receive the money, according to the service.

Sailors receive a skillset code after they have completed training for certain skills or knowledge, such as learning a new language or how to repair specific equipment.

“[The bonus] rewards sailors who attain training and skills most needed in the fleet and helps meet critical skill reenlistment benchmarks, while

enhancing [the] Navy’s ability to size, shape, and stabilize manning,” according to the Navy fact sheet on the bonus.

The Navy plans to spend slightly more than \$379 million on reenlistment bonuses once the fiscal year 2021 defense budget is approved, according to the service. The Defense Department is operating now under a continuing resolution while it waits for Congress to pass the defense funding bill.

The bonus is only eligible for sailors who have 14 years of service or less, broken up into three zones. Zone A is for sailors who have served up to six years, Zone B is for service between six to 10 years, and Zone C is for 10 to 14 years of service.

There are five bonus levels depending on the need for a specific skill: \$30,000; \$45,000; \$60,000; \$75,000, and \$100,000.

Sailors will receive half of their bonus upfront and the remainder will be spread out over the rest of their enlistment, according to the Navy. In addition, if a sailor reenlists in a designated combat zone, they can receive the entire bonus tax free.

The Navy said the service is constantly updating its bonus award levels, so sailors who do not take advantage of the money soon could lose out later.

The bonuses have also increased payouts for 14 skillsets but decreased the money for 51 others. The Navy removed 44 skillsets from the bonus list and left the money amount the same for 107 skills, according to a Navy fact sheet.

Sailors must submit their request for the bonus between 35 and 120 days prior to their reenlistment date, the fact sheet states.

## Portland rejects bid for \$18M police cut

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — City commissioners in Portland, Ore. on Thursday rejected a budget amendment that would have slashed another \$18 million from the Portland Police Bureau amid months of racial justice protests, and shifted the money to the city’s pandemic response.

The commission voted 3-2 against the amendment, which had been proposed by Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, the first Black woman on the elected body that acts like a city council.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who is also police commissioner, was one of three commissioners who voted last week to delay a vote on the budget amendment until after Tuesday’s election. Wheeler won a second term and voted “no” on the amend-

ment Thursday.

“Last week, we heard that it won’t require layoffs, which is wrong. It will require layoffs. This is not a detail. This is a critical piece of information,” he said before voting no.

“The testimony we’ve heard is clear: The status quo is unacceptable. Many Portlanders, and most of the people who testified about this item, do not trust the current criminal legal system — they do not trust the Police Bureau,” he said, adding that he nonetheless felt cutting the police budget further was not the solution.

The commission voted in June to cut nearly \$16 million from the police — eliminating school resource officers, transit police and a gun violence reduction unit — and the force has also suffered pandemic-related budget cuts.

Police accountability has

been a driving issue in Portland since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May and was one of the biggest issues in the mayor’s race. Portland has been roiled by five months of near-nightly Black Lives Matter protests and Wheeler has come under intense criticism for what many see as an overly aggressive police force.

A challenger to Wheeler’s left who attended dozens of protests against racial injustice and police brutality almost beat him by doubling down on a platform of police reform and proposed police budget cuts of \$50 million, among other things.

And while protests around the country focused on the vote count in the U.S. presidential election this week, protests in Portland were centered on racial injustice and police brutality.

# Unemployment drops; US adds 638K jobs

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers added 638,000 jobs in October, a solid pace though far fewer than needed to regain most of the jobs lost to the pandemic recession just as new viral cases are setting record highs.

The gain suggested that a tentative economic recovery is still intact even as it faces a surging viral outbreak. October's gain was slightly below the 672,000 jobs added in September and the 1.5 million in August.

But last month's gain was stronger than it appears: It was held down by the loss of about 150,000 temporary Census jobs. Excluding governments, private employers added a healthy 906,000 jobs. Job growth was particularly strong in construction, retail, and a category that includes restaurants and hotels.

The report Friday from the Labor Department said the unemployment rate fell to 6.9% from 7.9% in September. Still, the nation now has 10.1 million fewer jobs than it did before the pandemic intensified in March.

And the job market and the overall economy are under intensified pressure from the accelerating pandemic. On Thursday, the nation broke another record in the seven-day rolling average for new cases, hitting nearly 90,000. Daily new cases were also on track for another day above 100,000, with surging numbers reported all around the country, including a combined nearly 25,000 in Texas, Illinois and Florida.

## Connecticut

Connecticut residents were being urged Thursday to limit any nonessential trips between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus, a move that comes as the state starts rolling back portions of the third phase of reopening.

The Department of Public Health issued the statewide advisory, which takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on Friday. It applies

to all residents except essential workers who need to leave home to get to their jobs during that time period and people who need to leave home for an emergency to seek medical care, purchase medical supplies, food or groceries.

## Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Kentucky's bar and restaurant operators are getting a break from alcoholic beverage renewal fees in a cost-saving step as they struggle with revenue losses from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is granting a 12-month fee renewal waiver to license holders, Gov. Andy Beshear said Thursday.

Bar and restaurant operators who haven't submitted the renewal fee this year won't have to pay until 2021, he said. Those who have paid this year will have their fees waived in 2021, he said.

"This has certainly been a difficult year for our bars, restaurants and venues, and they deserve this innovative support as we face what could be a very painful winter," Beshear said.

## Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer urged Michigan lawmakers Thursday to enact a statewide law on mask wearing, as the state continues to shatter coronavirus case records and hospital admissions steadily rise.

A state emergency order already requires people to wear masks in indoor public places and crowded outdoor areas. But the Democratic governor said compliance might improve with bipartisan support from the GOP-led Legislature.

"We've known for a long time that the single most important weapon we have against this virus is the simple act of wearing a mask," Whitmer said. "Wearing a mask protects our families, it protects ourselves, it protects our frontline workers, and our most vulnerable members of our society."

## New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE — New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Thursday said the state has recorded its highest daily count for deaths related to the coronavirus pandemic in what has become a "dramatic, critical situation" that will likely result in tougher public health restrictions.

She announced an additional 23 deaths during a public briefing, saying that the statewide total now stands at more than 1,080. More than 10% of those deaths have come in the last two weeks as the state has been dealing with a surge of infections, higher positivity rates and more hospitalizations.

Nearly 17% of those who have been hospitalized in the state due to COVID-19 have died, state health officials said.

## New York

ALBANY — Nearly 3,000 people tested positive for COVID-19 in New York in one day, a milestone that illustrates the steady erosion of the progress the state made to get the virus under control this summer, according to state data released Thursday.

After averaging as few as 600 positive tests per day in August, autumn has brought a disturbing upswing.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has said weddings, birthdays and other private gatherings have fueled the spread, on top of universities and schools opening their doors. He has also pointed to public weariness of mask mandates and distancing rules.

## Tennessee

JOHNSON CITY — Health officials in northeastern Tennessee say they do not have enough nurses to combat COVID-19 inside its hospital system.

"There are no longer enough nurses to fill the need that we have," Ballad Health Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Smithgall told WJHL-TV.

According to Ballad Health, the hospital system is looking to hire 350 registered nurses to fill its nurse shortage.

"In the last eight weeks, we've had more than 900 patients admitted to COVID-19," said Ballad Health Chief Administrative Officer Eric Deaton.

## Texas

EL PASO — Five trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency have been brought to El Paso to help accommodate the surge of COVID-19 fatalities in the border city, officials said Thursday.

Three of the trailers were staged at the El Paso County Medical Examiner's Office while two were being held in reserve, said Jorge Rodriguez, the city's emergency management coordinator.

The Texas Funeral Service Commission also has been asked to send representatives to make an assessment of the needs of the area's funeral homes and mortuaries, he said.

## Vermont

MONTPELIER — Five Vermont state senators said Thursday that they were disturbed to learn that Walmart will not seek hazard pay grants for its Vermont employees who worked during the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a Thursday press release, the senators, led by Senate President Pro Tem Tim Ashe, said the grants of \$1,200 or \$2,000 are paid for by the state, but employers must apply on behalf of their workers.

They said the workers put themselves at risk while most Americans stayed at home.

"Their decision, cruel under any circumstances, is especially unthinkable since the grants are intended to thank essential workers who stayed on the job in high risk positions in the earliest days of the COVID pandemic," they said in the press release.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Great white shark reappears off coast

**NC** BUXTON — A massive great white shark who often swims off of North Carolina's coast has kept an active satellite tag longer than any other of her kind.

The Virginian-Pilot reported Tuesday that scientists tagged the now-famous shark seven years ago off Cape Cod.

The shark, named Katherine, was recently spotted swimming hundreds of miles off the coast of Virginia on Monday. It was the first evidence of her whereabouts in about a year and a half.

Ocearch, a nonprofit group doing research on large marine animals, has tagged about two dozen great whites. The tags bounce a signal from a satellite when they surface.

Katharine is 14 feet, 2 inches long and weighs 2,300 pounds. She has spent a large part of her life off the Outer Banks.

## Illegal gambling found at Moose Lodge

**NC** CHARLOTTE — A Moose Lodge in North Carolina could lose its liquor license and pay a fine after state agents discovered illegal pool gambling involving NASCAR races, authorities said.

The N.C. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission reported the game was discovered at the Mooresville lodge on March 5, The Charlotte Observer reported Thursday. No one answered the phone at the lodge on Thursday.

A report by an Alcohol Law Enforcement agent said cigarette cartons were cut open, with handwritten names on one side and numbers on the other covered by a flap. An envelope attached to the carton contained \$85, according to the report.

An employee told the agent that customers paid \$5 to participate in the lottery, writing their name across from the covered numbers, the report said. After a race finished, the numbers were revealed and the money awarded, the report said. The employee told the agent similar games are played at the lodge awarding prizes like guns and money.

The lodge faces suspension for five days starting Dec. 4 unless it pays a \$500 fine by Nov. 30, the report said.

## Troopers injured in crash scene response

**WA** LAKEWOOD — Two troopers in Washington state were injured after one trooper crashed into another's patrol car as they were responding to a single-vehicle accident on a rain-soaked highway, authorities said.

Washington State Patrol Trooper Ryan Burke said a trooper arrived on scene Thursday just before 2:30 a.m. on Interstate 5 where a driver had fallen asleep and struck a barrier, KOMO-TV reported.

A second trooper lost control of his patrol car as he was approaching the scene and smashed into the first trooper's patrol vehicle, which then collided with the civilian's car, Burke said.

Both troopers were taken to St. Clare Hospital and treated for minor injuries, Burke said.

## Calendar of roadside wildflowers available

**WV** CHARLESTON — West Virginia's free 2021 calendar of wildflowers growing in the state is now available to order.

The calendar has 12 pictures of flowers growing along state highways or in beds created by the state. Dozens of photog-

raphers snapped pictures and submitted them this year.

The annual project is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Adopt A Highway program. The state's Operation Wildflower program helps create garden beds and plant wildflowers along roadways.

Calendars can be ordered on the Department of Environmental Protection's website.

## County approves sale of beer and liquor

**MS** TYLERTOWN — A county in southwestern Mississippi has voted to legalize the sale of beer, light wine and liquor.

Walthall County joins several other places in Mississippi that have moved from dry to wet in recent years.

The Enterprise-Journal reported that the beer and light wine were one ballot question and liquor was another in Walthall County, which borders Louisiana. Each passed with about 75% support.

Mississippi Department of Revenue maps show that Walthall had been among a small number of counties that were completely dry because they did not have any exceptions for cities or resort areas to sell beer, light wine or liquor.

## New company to make medical gloves, hire 192

**KY** PARIS — A new company plans to open a high-tech manufacturing facility in central Kentucky, creating nearly 200 new jobs, officials said.

U.S. Medical Glove Co. LLC plans to invest \$32.5 million to purchase, retrofit and expand an existing facility in Paris that will employ 192 people and produce medical-grade gloves,

Gov. Andy Beshear said in a statement on Wednesday.

The company's automated manufacturing operation is expected to start next year with the production of more than 1 billion Liberty Gloves. Initially, the company plans to hire 45 computer technicians and hire additional staff as new production lines are installed.

Retired Maj. Gen. Michael Davidson is the CEO of U.S. Medical Glove and said the company aims to provide jobs for area veterans.

"They bring the values and skills they learned in their military service," Davidson said. "We describe Liberty Gloves as made for America by Americans."

## Man struck, killed by car in his own yard

**MA** SHERBORN — A Massachusetts man was struck and killed by a car in his own yard and the driver is facing charges, police said Wednesday.

Sherborn police said a 40-year-old man was struck at around 4:40 p.m. by an Acura SUV. The Sherborn resident, who police didn't identify, was pronounced dead on scene.

The driver of the vehicle, Joshua Patel, 37, of Mansfield, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence and other charges.

He was to be arraigned in Natick District Court on Thursday.

Police said their preliminary investigation suggests Patel struck the victim and then struck another car. Responding officers also observed signs of impairment on Patel, police said.

The Middlesex District Attorney's Office and State Police are also investigating.

From wire reports

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# Rogers, Packers rout hobbled Niners

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Aaron Rodgers took advantage of the undermanned San Francisco 49ers rather than sympathizing with the team that dominated his Green Bay Packers twice last season.

Rodgers threw for 305 yards and four touchdowns and the Packers overwhelmed the depleted 49ers 34-17 on Thursday night.

“They’re a different team on paper for sure,” Rodgers said. “They’ve had some tough injuries to some really key players, but no one’s feeling sorry for anybody in this league. That’s the way it goes. Nobody’s feeling sorry for us. We’re dealing with injuries.”

Rodgers connected on deep shots to Davante Adams and Marquez Valdes-Scantling, and a short toss to Marcedes Lewis in the first half to get the Packers (6-2) out to a 21-3 lead over the Niners (4-5).

It was quite a reversal from the two meetings last season when San Francisco outscored Green Bay by a combined 50-0 in the first halves on the way to lopsided wins in the regular

season and NFC title game.

The rematch looked nothing like those games in part because the Niners were missing almost all their key pieces from the game because of injuries and a positive coronavirus test for receiver Kendrick Bourne that also sidelined three of his teammates for “high risk” contacts.

That left San Francisco without quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo (ankle), All-Pro tight end George Kittle (foot), NFC title game star running back Raheem Mostert (ankle), receivers Deebo Samuel (hamstring) and Brandon Aiyuk (COVID-19 list), left tackle Trent Williams (COVID-19 list) and key defenders Nick Bosa (knee), Dee Ford (back) and Richard Sherman (calf).

“We knew it was going to be a challenge,” 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. “We knew at the start of the week it would be a challenge. Losing those three guys yesterday would be a bigger challenge. I still thought we could have a game. ... I know we could have done better.”

Rodgers and the Packers,

who were missing three players on the COVID-19 list, took advantage of the opportunity.

Rodgers capped the opening drive with a 36-yard shot to Adams, who made an acrobatic catch over Emmanuel Moseley in the end zone for his league-leading eighth TD reception of the season.

Nick Mullens had an apparent TD throw to River Cracraft wiped out on replay for San Francisco and then threw an interception to Raven Greene after backup left tackle Justin Skule got beat for a pressure from Preston Smith.

That mistake led to Rodgers’ 1-yard throw to Lewis and the Packers took control when Valdes-Scantling got behind the defense for the 52-yard catch late in the first half.

“I know they were missing some creatures on both sides of the ball, but that’s one of the better defenses I think that we’ve played despite missing some of those guys,” Packers coach Matt LaFleur said. “On offense it’s always difficult going against Kyle and that staff.”

Rodgers added a second TD

pass to Valdes-Scantling and the rout was on.

Adams finished with 10 catches for 173 yards, making him the first Packers player with three 150-yard receiving games since Donald Driver in 2006.

“We’re definitely in a groove right now,” Adams said. “I don’t have much to say about it, I don’t want to sound conceited or nothing, sound bad, but obviously when you start getting in a rhythm like that, it does get a lot easier.”

**Fast starters:** Rodgers’ TD pass to Adams gave the Packers an opening drive score for the eighth straight game to open the season. The only other team to do that since 2000 was New England in 2007. The Patriots streak stopped after eight games. The Packers have four TDs and four field goals on opening drives for a league-best 40 points.

**Big day:** The lone bright spot for the 49ers was the performance of receiver Richie James Jr., who had nine catches for 184 yards and a TD. James entered the game with 295 yards receiving in 32 career games.

## Source: Raiders hit hard for COVID-19 violations

Associated Press

The Las Vegas Raiders and coach Jon Gruden have been fined a total of \$650,000 and docked a sixth-round draft pick for repeated violations of the NFL’s COVID-19 protocols.

A person familiar with the punishment said Thursday the team has been fined \$500,000, Gruden has been docked \$150,000 and the draft pick has been stripped because of how the team handled Trent Brown’s positive coronavirus test last month. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made.

Yahoo first reported the punishments.

The Raiders have been penalized several times already this season for violating coronavirus protocols with the punishments leading to a total of \$1,215,000 for the team, Gruden and players.

While several teams have been fined so far this season, the Raiders are the first to

be penalized a draft pick following multiple violations.

The latest punishment stems from Brown’s positive test last month when the Raiders were already supposed to be in “intensive” protocols following teammate Damon Arnette’s positive test.

At a practice on Oct. 19 a day before Brown tested positive, he was not wearing a mask as required and didn’t socially distance with teammates. That led to four other starting offensive linemen to be placed on the COVID-19 list as “high-risk” contacts. They missed the rest of the practice week before returning the morning of a 45-20 loss to Tampa Bay on Oct. 25.

Safety Johnathan Abram was forced to miss that game because he spent time with Brown the following day and wasn’t cleared to return until Oct. 26.

Brown was activated from the COVID-19 list last week but missed the game at Cleveland after a reported mishap with an

IV sent him to the hospital before the game. Brown went back on the COVID-19 list Thursday when he had more symptoms.

Gruden had the coronavirus in July and has praised the team’s handling of the issue despite repeated violations.

Gruden was fined \$100,000 and the team docked \$250,000 after the coach didn’t wear his mask properly during a Week 2 win over New Orleans. The team also was fined \$50,000 for allowing an unauthorized employee in the locker room after the game.

Tight end Darren Waller was fined \$30,000 and nine teammates, including quarterback Derek Carr, were fined \$15,000 for attending an indoor charity event held by Waller’s foundation that violated local coronavirus protocols. Players were seen at the event not wearing masks or social distancing.

The team didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

# Air Force disappointed in cancellation

*Tribune News Service*

WEST POINT, N.Y. — The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed another Army football game, and this is a big one.

An outbreak of the coronavirus at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., has forced the postponement of the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy game at West Point on Saturday morning. A sellout in non-COVID years, no fans other than West Point cadets were going to be permitted inside Michie Stadium. The game was going to be televised by CBS.

"We are disappointed to postpone this game," said Air Force director of athletics Nathan Pine, "but the health and safety of our cadets, staff and the community continues to be our number one priority at the Academy. Due to the upward trends in our COVID numbers across the campus, we have paused all intercollegiate team

activities."

Pine said efforts are being made to re-schedule the contest but that appears very unlikely this fall due to the unavailability of open dates.

The Colorado Springs Gazette was reporting that as many as seven Air Force players would be unavailable for the contest. A source said the Pentagon called the game off, despite pleas to play from officials of both schools.

A source told the Times Herald-Record there are 110 cadets quarantined on the West Point post due to COVID tracing of other individuals but with no cadets testing positive. Another source said players have already been moved out of the barracks and to a local hotel in order to socially distance — the Army football team has for years sequestered at hotels on Friday nights in advance of Saturday home games but this is different, the source said.

Lt. Col. Chris Ophardt, a

West Point spokesman, confirmed that the football team began sequestering at a hotel on Friday.

The Commander-in-Chief's Trophy series has been contested since 1972 when the three service academies agreed to meet annually. The winner of two games between Army, Navy and Air Force takes possession of the trophy. Air Force beat Navy, 40-7, on Oct. 3. With a win over Army, the Falcons would have claimed the Trophy for the 21st time.

This is a crushing blow for all involved. Army coach Jeff Monken has been quoted regularly throughout his seven seasons of the critical importance of winning the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, and this week was no different.

"Obviously, this week is a big game for us," Monken said at his Tuesday press conference. "We haven't had a bigger game this year than the one we're going to play this weekend. I

know our guys are excited for the opportunity and certainly what's at stake when we play the academy games to earn the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. It's always a great game and always a tremendous battle and hopefully we'll play well enough this Saturday that we can make it a battle again."

Rescheduling the Air Force game may be near impossible, again due to COVID. The pandemic originally led Mountain West Conference officials to cancel the fall 2020 season, though Air Force — like Army and Navy — remained committed to the Commander-in-Chief series and agreed to retain the service academy dates.

Like the Big Ten, Pac 12 and Mid-America conferences, the Mountain West reversed course on Sept. 25 and announced it would play a league schedule starting Oct. 24. As a result, that left Air Force with no open dates between Oct. 24 and Dec. 3.

## Big 12 has likely blown opportunity to make playoff

*Associated Press*

The Big 12 made it to November with every team at least halfway through its reduced regular-season schedule, five-time defending conference champion Oklahoma finally on a roll — and the league probably already out of playoff contention.

Even before the Pac-12 starts play this weekend and with the Big Ten only two games in after its delayed start in this pandemic-affected season.

No. 14 Oklahoma State (4-1, 3-1 Big 12) is the only Big 12 team without at least two losses, even though none has played more than six games. Every team has lost in league play, and the only three non-conference losses were all to opponents from the Sun Belt — no fun for a Power Five league.

While the Big 12 made some schedule revisions and kicked off the season in September

like the SEC and ACC, the 10-team league that has had only Oklahoma make the College Football Playoff in the past has already cannibalized its chances of getting one of the four playoff spots.

"You know we debate that every year anyway. So it's a mess with where we're at," Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy said of comparing the leagues. "How it's all going to end up, I've got no idea how they'll come to that conclusion. We all signed up for the same policies to start the season. So we've got to kind of get in line and take what medicine they give us."

After starting 0-2 in the Big 12 for the first time since 1998, Oklahoma (4-2, 3-2) has won its last three games. The Sooners won in four overtimes against Texas in a strange scene at the State Fair of Texas, then won by 19 points over TCU and 34 points over Texas Tech while

not playing a game in Norman in the month of October.

Oklahoma has to keep winning just to make the Big 12 championship game and have a chance to win its sixth conference title in a row.

The latest ESPN playoff predictor gives the Sooners only a 1% chance of being in the CFP for the fifth time in six seasons. That is only slightly below the 1.2% chance given to Oklahoma State. Two Pac-12 teams that haven't even played a game are given at least a 15% chance.

"I just never get caught up in that," Sooners coach Lincoln Riley said. "We've got a good league, a lot of strong teams in the league right now. This year is difficult to judge anybody, I think, based on all that's going on. But maybe more difficult than in a normal year."

Oklahoma State or Kansas State (4-2, 4-1), who play Saturday, will go from no Big 12 losses to two in that many games.

They were the last teams unbeaten in conference play, until the last day of October when the Cowboys lost in overtime to No. 22 Texas and the Wildcats with their freshman quarterback fell 37-10 at West Virginia.

After an open date, Oklahoma State then faces the Bedlam game against the Sooners in Norman on the same day that Kansas State goes to No. 17 Iowa State (4-2, 4-1).

While Baylor and TCU weren't able to play their scheduled non-conference games because of COVID-19 issues, there has been only one game altered since the Big 12 got into conference play Sept. 26.

The Big 12 pushed back Baylor's home game Oct. 17 against Oklahoma State to Dec. 12 because of an outbreak of positive tests in the Bears program. That was a tentative date for the Big 12 title game, which will likely get moved to the following weekend.

# Path to NASCAR title clear for final 4

Associated Press

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Kevin Harvick was a sure bet to make the NASCAR finale and likely close out one of the most dominant seasons of the decade.

Instead, he's been eliminated and the hyped head-to-head matchup between Harvick and Denny Hamlin has been scrapped. For better or worse, NASCAR's title-deciding format knocked the strongest team this season from contention for Sunday's winner-take-all final four at Phoenix Raceway.

"I'm not going to view if we win it any different whether he was in or out," Hamlin said Thursday.

No one denies Harvick deserved a chance at the title. He won a series-high nine times, had a whopping 20 top-five finishes and led nearly every statistical category this year. It was a back-and-forth between Harvick and Hamlin that most assumed would go down to the finale.

But Harvick had a poor third round of the playoffs and his season collapsed. He's out of the way and Hamlin will race Chase Elliott, Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano for the Cup Series championship.

It's a much cleaner path to the title since Harvick is a nine-time winner at Phoenix, which is hosting NASCAR's championship weekend for the first time.

Out of the mix, he might still be in contention for the race win.

"They've got a chip on the shoulder and if they've got a fast car, they are going to give the guys in the championship a whole lot of trouble," said NBC Sports analyst Dale Earnhardt Jr. "I think Harvick might hustle up in there and just not care."

Hamlin, a seven-race winner this season, believes the champion has to win Sunday. But he also knows Harvick has nothing to lose.

"I still think I'm going to have to race him," Hamlin said. "I would think they probably come loaded and ready to go out and show that they should be champions, right? I don't expect him to waffle around and just kind of let all four of us go race for it."

Hamlin has had conversations with Harvick and some of his Stewart-Haas Racing crew since Harvick's dramatic elimination. Hamlin appreciates the

season his rival has put together in the pandemic-altered season, when there was no practice or qualifying, and Harvick and crew were good every week with the car brought straight from the shop.

Harvick was so focused on winning a second Cup title that he homeschooled his 8-year-old to minimize health risks. The No. 4 team was locked in on the championship and everyone expected them at Phoenix.

"In my mind he was deserving of racing for a championship, but didn't earn it because of the system," Hamlin said. "I understand their pain."

There's a balance, though, in commiserating with Harvick and exulting over the opportunity ahead. Keselowski won a series-high six races in 2014 but didn't make it to the final four that season, the year Harvick won his only title.

Now Keselowski is in the championship round with a chance at his own second crown.

"It's a helpless feeling. It's a frustrating feeling. But it's what the format is," Keselowski said. "I do feel those sympathies for him. In a selfish way, I'm glad that I won't have to compete against him."

Logano raced his way into the finale as the only playoff driver with a third-round victory. Since clinching his berth three weeks ago, his Team Penske crew has been focused on a plan for Phoenix and doesn't much care about Harvick's fate.

"I honestly as a competitor don't have many feelings for others," Logano said. "When I'm competing, it's about my team."

Elliott, racing in the final four for the first time in his career, has somewhat shielded himself from the dramatics of the season and focused only on his Hendrick Motorsports effort. He's taken a break from social media over the closing months of the season and didn't focus on Harvick's season.

"For us to sit here and talk about others, or the other three guys in it, or who's not in it, who somebody thinks the favorite is or isn't, is just very unproductive in my eyes," Elliott said. "I'm just really thinking about us, being selfish in a lot of ways this week, trying to put emphasis on the things that are going to make us go fast. Me ranking Kevin's season is not one of them."

## NBA player representatives approve 75-game season

Associated Press

The National Basketball Players Association voted Thursday to support the notion of starting this coming season on Dec. 22, the date that the league has been targeting in its talks about how and when to get teams back on the floor for a planned 72-game season.

The vote, conducted by the NBPA's board — which has a player rep from each team, entrusted to speak on behalf of his teammates — is just another part of a lengthy process. Among the primary matters still to be determined: how much escrow will be taken

from player salaries because of the shorter-than-usual season, and how the league and the players will navigate testing and other health and safety issues amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

All that has to be worked out before the plans for next season truly become official.

"Additional details remain to be negotiated and the NBPA is confident that the parties will reach agreement on these remaining issues relevant to the upcoming season," the union said in a statement.

Talks between the NBA and NBPA on those and other topics are continuing, though

there is obvious urgency to finalize things. The NBA Draft is scheduled for Nov. 18 and the plan presented to players — and now approved by the team reps — calls for training camps to begin on Dec. 1.

Free agency would almost certainly have to be wedged between the draft and the start of those camps, the league year would have to open, trades would have to become permissible again and some players need to be presented with deadlines by which they will have to either accept or decline options for this coming season.

The NBA wanted the Dec. 22 start date over a mid-Janu-

ary notion for many reasons, revenue being foremost among them. A 72-game season, by league estimates, would allow for \$500 million more in revenue than a season of no more than 60 games — the mid-January option — would have provided.

The Dec. 22 start also means that the NBA's traditional Christmas schedule of games will be possible, something the league and its broadcast partners wanted. The season is also expected to conclude before the start of next summer's Tokyo Olympics, meaning NBA player participation in those games remains possible.